

a developing device which develops areas irradiated by the spot of the laser beam with developer;

a memory which stores a plurality of exposure patterns corresponding to a plurality of tone levels, respectively, each of said plurality of exposure patterns defining a number of irradiation by the spot of the laser beam and the positions of the irradiation within a specific range, at least two of said plurality of exposure patterns being identical in the number of the irradiation but different in the positions of the irradiation within said specific range for realizing different tone levels, wherein a size of the area developed by the developing device within said specific range is different for each tone level;

a controller which receives multi-tone image data representing a tone level of a multi-tone image and specifies one of said plurality of exposure patterns in response to the multi-tone image data; and

a driver which drives said laser optical system to control generation of the laser beam by reviewing the exposure pattern specified by said controller.

Please add the following new claims 37-38:

37. (New) A multi-tone image recording apparatus as claimed in claim 17, wherein said size of the area developed by the developing device within said specific range varies depending upon the number of adjacent irradiations continuing in the main scanning direction within said specific range.

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38. (New) A multi-tone image recording apparatus as claimed in claim 17,
wherein said size of the area developed by the developing device within said specific range
varies depending upon the number of adjacent irradiations continuing in the main scanning
direction or the sub-scanning direction within said specific range.

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